**I. Overview of Project**

**A. Description of proposed project**

The TRC project is designed to assist a motivated and committed administration and instructional staff at Franklin Elementary School develop the necessary skills to make the shift from traditional teaching to facilitating student learning in a 21st century learning environment that utilizes technology and constructivist pedagogy including project based learning (PBL). All staff at Franklin (especially administration and the participating teachers) is keenly aware of the necessity to integrate technology into classroom instruction in meaningful ways and to implement engaging, challenging, and instructive lessons in a true 21st Century Learning Environment in order to engage students and increase their learning. While this awareness is developing, teachers are struggling to develop a full understanding and to apply and integrate new tools and methodologies in their practices. Consequently, they are requesting concentrated assistance in learning and mastering technology and investigative learning to enhance their teaching skills and effectiveness in instructing students. This project will provide the needed assistance to implement TRC in four classrooms (one 3rd, one 4th, and two 5th grade classes) and will provide the experience and in-house resources to expand and proliferate TRC throughout the school and to establish Franklin as a resource for expansion to other schools in the district. The proposed project will focus on reading as the area of primary need and will increase the presence of technology in an existing high access environment*.*

**B. Description of project/districts commitment**

Wichita Public Schools (WPS) – is totally committed to implementing the TRC. Central office administrators and building staff are all fully supportive of all aspects of the project. Having received and successfully implemented six TRC projects since 2002, the district has worked to expand and proliferate the project and its principles and practices throughout the district. WPS will continue to support TRC projects toward a change of culture throughout the district.

Franklin Elementary School – is aware of the increasing needs of its students and the need to implement more effective instructional strategies to prepare them to compete and thrive in the 21st century. The entire staff is committed to this as a goal and knows the value of technology and constructivist pedagogy in addressing it. Franklin has created and published a list of “*10 Commitments*” that clearly outlines that dedication and paves the way for TRC implementation. In her three years at Franklin, the principal has judiciously utilized funding from various sources to greatly increase the presence of technology in all classrooms and has encouraged the use professional development opportunities to maximize its effective use by teachers. The submission of this grant and the acceptance of and obligation to all assurances for its successful implementation is a further indication of this total commitment to take the necessary actions to provide 21st century learning environments for the benefit of students.

**C. Description of district/school needs**

Wichita Public Schools – is the largest school district in the state and is responsible for educating approximately 10% of the state’s k–12 population. As the state’s most diverse urban district, WPS has struggled to meet the demands of this diversity and to incorporate emerging technology and pedagogy to address them. In spite of having a knowledgeable and committed administration and staff, WPS is a district on improvement for the 6th year. In spite of achieving many points of pride and making consistent improvement on measures of student achievement, the district still lags behind state averages on all assessed areas. While the importance of implementing research on how today’s students learn, brain-based learning, and 21st century tools and methodologies to meet the demands of an ever-changing student population is increasingly evident, a $30 million shortfall in 2011-2012 (on top of a $24 million deficit in 2010-2011) makes it impossible to allot the resources needed to affect the necessary changes. WPS sees TRC as an opportunity to maintain a focus on developing 21st century learning environments for students.

Franklin Elementary School – is a Title I school that did not meet AYP goals in 2009-2010 and is consequently on improvement for reading for the next two years. The school struggles to serve the many needs of its very high risk, high poverty, and increasingly diverse population. Current demographics show a population with very high percentages of economically disadvantaged students (89.5%), mobile students (75.4% mobility rate), and English Language Learners (21.2%) – all of which bring specific needs for effective instructional methodologies to assure their mastery of skills necessary for success in the 21str century. Table 1 delineates the high level of those percentages when compared to both WPS and the state of Kansas.

*Table 1 – Demographic makeup of Franklin Elementary School by percent of total enrollment*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Af. Amer. | Hisp. | White | Other | F&R | ELL | Mobility |
| Franklin | 7.41 | 38.75 | 42.45 | 21.7 | 89.5 | 21.2 | 75.4 |
| District | 19.5 | 27.3 | 38.6 | 14.3 | 70.4 | 17.5 | ~~--~~ |
| State | 7.5 | 15.8 | 68.9 | 7.8 | 45.7 | 9.1 | -- |

*Source: District Enrollment Records*

1) Student academic achievement

In the targeted area of reading, state assessment scores for Franklin students are significantly below both district and state averages as depicted in Table 2. On specific reading indicators for 3rd grade, scores for only 3 of the 11 were above the cut score and all but one showed decreases of as much of 12 points. For 4th grade, scores for 8 of 13 indicators showed a decrease of as much as 7.6 points.

Table 2: Percent of students scoring proficient and above – trend from 2006

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **% Scoring Proficient in Reading** | | | | | | **Increase in Academic Warning** | | | | | | | |
| **06** | **07** | **08** | **09** | **10** | **Change ‘09 to ‘10** | **3rd**  **2009** | | **3rd**  **2010** | | **4th**  **2009** | | **4th**  **2010** | |
| All Students | 58.5 | 60.9 | 70.9 | 65.1 | 57.1 | -8.0 | 24.1 | | 34.5 | | 8.5 | | 22.4 | |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  | |  | |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  | |  | |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  | |  | |  |
| ELL | 51.2 | - | - | - | 32.4 | - | 18.2 | | 35.0 | | - | | 36.4 | |
| Low SES | 56.4 | 60.5 | 71.3 | 64.2 | 53.7 | -10.5 | 27.7 | | 36.0 | | 7.1 | | 24.4 | |
| Hispanic | 54.3 | 58.5 | 76.2 | 61.5 | 44.4 | -17.1 | 21.1 | | 31.8 | | - | | 21.1 | |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  | |  | |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | |  | |  | |  |
| White | 57.7 | 62.5 | 64.0 | 63.3 | 66.2 | +2.9 | 19.0 | | 36.4 | | 15.0 | | 10.5 | |

*Source: Official Enrollment Data*

Of specific concern – both to the benefit of individual students and to the school at large – is the achievement gap in reading that is negatively impacting not only student success, but also the ability of the school to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) goals and to get off improvement. A further analysis of the reading assessment data shows that scores for the school do not tell the whole story and that the need for enhanced instruction is far greater than depicted. While the scores for “All Students” and for each demographic subgroup has decreased for all groups except white students, there is a more alarming trend in the 3rd and 4th grade to have significant increases in percentages of students scoring in the “Academic Warning” range (See table 2). In addition, AIMS Web assessment scores for reading were well below WPS targets and, in all areas but one, the percent scoring less than the target was greater than the percent scoring higher.

2) Teacher professional development.

Teachers agree that the main missing ingredient to success is training on technology integration and continuing support through follow along training including coaching. Teachers’ self assessment on Profiler Pro yielded an overall average of 2.4 out of 5 points. Results further show that, with the exception of only three specific skills indicators, they feel that they do not currently have comfort in their ability to integrate any tech skill into their teaching of students.

On a recent, locally developed survey of all teachers at Franklin, responses revealed that:

* Teachers feel that they are “Proficient” or “Expert” with Microsoft word and Internet Explorer but are much less comfortable with Excel, Publisher and PowerPoint.
* Teachers are well based on the profile of the 21st century learner and on what is necessary to adequately educate them for the 21st century.
* 55% of teachers feel the educational system does not prepare students adequately to compete in the 21st century global economy.
* 95% of teachers are either “Somewhat Willing” (36%) or “Very Willing” (59%) to substantially change their instruction practices if provided PD and follow along support.

Further, teachers’ self assessment of their and the school’s status on the Project for the 21st Century’s *Mile Guide* shows that none see either themselves or the school as “21st Century” and besides an occasional project and extensive use of cooperative learning, they see the school as being only at the “Early” stage of transition.

Clearly, teachers are knowledgeable of what needs to be done and are personally motivated to learn how to better meet the needs of their students. Further, professional development is needed and desired by all staff to be able to make the necessary changes.

3) Need for technology

Since there has been conscientious and consistent acquisition of technology in the school, technology needs are limited to minimal requests to complete the requirements of a TRC classroom. Those needs are outlined in the budget and budget narrative.

**D. Justification of need for project**

There is a strong and distinct need for the school to have the support of the TRC project in order to affect the change in culture that is necessary to establish Franklin as a 21st century learning environment that can adequately prepare students with the necessary skills and abilities to thrive in their academic and in life pursuits beyond high school. A recent survey of Franklin parents shows that while most homes have at least “some” technology, students use it more for games and social networking (89%) than for homework (47%). Further, 37% of parents do not use a computer or consider themselves to be “beginners” with technology and only 25% feel they can help their child learn to use technology for homework. Additionally, 80% of respondents want to have more technology for instruction at school and 73% feel that their child would be more engaged in school work if more technology was used in their classrooms.

With the drastic funding cuts experienced by the district, resources are increasingly limited for the development of technology rich classrooms and the school’s ability to increase teacher competence with comprehensive professional development is greatly jeopardized. Given the needs of students and the dedication, motivation and commitment of the staff at Franklin, funding of the proposed project will not only yield increases in instruction and consequent improvement in their students’ scores, but it will also spawn a school wide change in culture that will benefit all students in an ever changing world.